

**Planning Commission Comments from the April 8, 2014 Meeting  
2013 EAR, A1400002**

- Mr. Gibbs** Approve
- Mr. Harris** Voted yes.  
Please consider increase funding for EMS, Water Management and General Services.
- Ms. Huff** I agree with Commissioner Whitley, if it is possible within this policy framework for a commitment to better routing for buses, that commitment should be made. Since I don't live in town and rarely have a reason to use the bus system, I was surprised and chagrined to learn the configuration of the bus routes. Looking at the map it would seem that connectivity is sorely needed between the bus routes.
- I also agree with Commissioner Miller that the concept of pocket neighborhoods needs to be introduced somewhere within these policies.
- 8.1.2d I would like to see NCDOT's "Complete Streets Planning and Design Guidelines" adopted in the County.
- Mr. Miller** I am uncomfortable with the proposed changes to policy statements 3.6.3a and 3.6.3b found on pages 5 and 6 of the report. To the extent that these policy changes signal a retreat from code enforcement in all neighborhoods or the involvement of neighborhoods in code enforcement issues with the NIS department, I am opposed to the changes. I oppose a policy statement that indicates that code enforcement resources will be deployed only by the Mayor's Poverty Reduction Initiative. I support the initiative and I am not opposed to the temporary concentration of enforcement resources in a way that is coordinated with the initiative as a management decision, but I would prefer not to tie the deployment enforcement resources to the initiative as a matter of comprehensive plan policy.
- With regard to the proposed policy change to policy statement 3.7.1b concerning testing to enforce fair housing laws, I know from long professional experience as an attorney for the NC Real Estate Commission that housing discrimination continues to exist in North Carolina and that proving such cases can be very difficult without testing. Rather than eliminate a policy that says the city will use testing because the resources are not available, I suggest that we replace it with statement that the city will enforce fair housing laws with testing and other means as the resources for such measures may become available. In this way we will not have to change the policy back in the event the city budgets for testing or if the city obtains a grant to accomplish it. I also hope that we will continue to seek grants and other resources to effectively combat unlawful housing discrimination.
- In Attachment 5 of the report concerning the proposed policy statement 4.2.3b requiring the development of nonresidential building design standards for building types outside the Design

Districts, I suggest that this statement be amended to expressly include multi-story multi-family residential buildings as well. I believe we need specific design standards for this building type inside and outside Design Districts. In design districts (downtown and Ninth Street) these buildings have been planned within existing frontage type regulations that were not created to effectively deal with them. The result has been an annoyance to the developers who must either tack on unwanted balconies or create courtyards which do not serve the purpose of real courtyards as contemplated in the regulations. Instead, we need design regulations which are developed specifically with this building type in mind. In the development trends section of the report it is noted that the newest market demographic is young unattached singles. The industry has responded with a new multifamily housing type which is regulated in terms of mass and scale not by Durham's zoning regulations but by the NC building code. These buildings are going up all over town. There are five projects in the Ninth district totaling 1200 units. There is another, giant project going up on West Chapel Hill Street and two more going up in the central downtown area. Our current design regulations do not fit these developments. The Comprehensive Plan should envisage the creation of a body of design regulations for this building type.

Finally, I would like the Comprehensive Plan to contain a statement favoring the creation of zoning and design regulations that would allow high-density single family housing in design districts and compact neighborhood tiers in the form of "pocket neighborhoods" as that concept has been treated in developments in other jurisdictions and in the writings of Ross Chapin. I realize that it may be sometime before such regulations can be created, but excellent guiding models exist. I believe that given the market demographics and trends identified by the report, the time is ripe for this type of development. Having it in our tool box will promote housing densities sufficient to support the city's transit program and will allow for diversity in housing types that the UDO does not currently encourage.

**Mr. Padgett** Approve

**Ms. Winders** I would like to see the affordable housing need mentioned in the summary report of trends reflected in the comprehensive plan policies. I suggest an addition to Policy 2.2.4a, after "auto-oriented and low-intensity uses shall be discouraged." Add "Housing Affordable to households earning 60% or less of the Area Median Income shall be encouraged".